# The Face in the Girandole

William Frederick Dix

Lillian R. Mahaffey

# THE FACE IN THE GIRANDOLE

Seeing us she hesitated *(Page 56)*

# THE FACE IN THE GIRANDOLE

A ROMANCE OF
OLD FURNITURE

BY
WILLIAM FREDERICK DIX

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## THE GIRANDOLE.

Like a pale moon enframed in clouds of gold,
Fair, orbèd glass, how much you might have told
Of scenes evanished from before your face,
Had you the wish to and of speech the grace!
Two gilded cornucopias ascend
To frame you; slender, spiral sconces bend
On either side to hold each taper-light
That shines reflected in your face at night.
Child of your master maker Chippendale,
Who wrought your ornaments so fair and frail,
Did Great Grand-mother pause in tête-à-tête
Before you seeing if her hat were straight,
Or Great Grand-father, in the lover's role,
Adjust his scarf before you, Girandole?
Did men and maidens steal a furtive glance,

## *The Girandole*

Threading the mazes of the stately dance,
At patch or bow or velvet coat or lace,
As now we moderns seek your shining face?
Times change and manners, dress and customs pass
And flash reflected in your shining glass,
But sweet Miss Cynthia shows you eyes of blue,
Just as Grand-mother Cynthia used to do,
And smiles back at you, type of modern maid.
Sweet, is she not, as those of times more staid?
But ah! your secret thoughts will ne'er be told,
Fair crystal moon enframed in clouds of gold.

W. F. D.

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# I

## I CATCH THE CRAZE FROM MY AUNT

I CAUGHT the microbe from my aunt and she developed the craze in an unexpected way. She had a large and comfortable house furnished in rosewood, oak, and black walnut. The parlor had her old New York City house set, re-covered with modern upholstery, the library was in oak, and the dining-room was in black walnut. Up-stairs she had all kinds and the attic was a repository of much "truck," too good to give to the furnace man but of no earthly use in her suburban

home. One day she discovered the alluring shop of Old Pierre and Young Pierre, who browsed about among these old New Jersey towns and rescued, at insignificant prices, blackened and battered scullery tables, which, under their transforming hands, emerged as inlaid mahogany sideboards or console-tables, and cleverly exhumed other despised articles which forthwith became pieces of beauty.

She saw a tall clock in the doorway. Also Old Pierre saw her—a "likely" customer, evidently a city woman of taste and probable means. Soon she was inside, and the love of bargaining, inherited from her Connecticut ancestors, emerged into the sunlight, even as the landscape grain-

ing of old mahogany emerged from its blackened varnish in the workshop behind her. She thought of her clockless hallway. Also of some oak bookcases in her attic; and the battle was joined. What were the Gallic wiles of Old Pierre against those of the heir of generations of inherited Connecticut blandishments! In a few days the clock tick-tocked cheerfully in my aunt's hall and Old Pierre was extolling the excellence of oak bookcases to his clients.

"And only twenty dollars in cash, my dear nephew!" my aunt exulted to me.

And the microbe began to propagate, for soon a fine old console-table with columns at the side and a mirror under

the table-shelf was obtained — after much exchange of talk, — for a walnut bureau and a cellaret and ten dollars in cash. With the two dignified pieces of fine old mahogany in the house came the realization of the unattractiveness of the output of the mansard-roof-black-walnut-and-Eastlake period. Books on old furniture, such as Luke Vincent Lockwood's "Colonial Furniture in America," Esther Singleton's "French and English Furniture," Macquoid's "A History of English Furniture," Virginia Robie's "Historic Styles in Furniture," and Frederick Litchfield's "How to Collect Old Furniture" were studied, and a new and fascinating aim of life came into her existence.

## *I Catch the Craze from My Aunt*

What were the fascinating attractions of the Woman's Club, or the Hospital Auxiliary, compared to the joy of a bargain well made with Old Pierre! What was the paltry and fleeting joy of the Bridge Whist table compared to the perpetual satisfaction of ownership of an Empire one with claw feet! History became endued with new interest. How stimulating to think of Washington rising from a carved, four-post bed and taking his clothes from a genuine Chippendale chair or a colonial highboy to dress and sally forth to do battle with the redcoats of Cornwallis, whose English home probably was crowded with Georgian furniture! Think of Napoleon, resting from cares

of state at Malmaison, surrounded with Empire settees and cabinets! And what treasures must have crowded the salons of Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI, — those magical terms of the modern decorator!

One day my aunt telephoned to me to come down to dinner. Her voice trembled with suppressed eagerness and visions of the roll-top desk in the third story or the back spare room walnut bureau suddenly transferred to the little furniture shop, rose before me. What had supplanted them? I went. My aunt hovered immediately behind the housemaid who opened the door. Her eyes shone. Even the tall clock seemed to tick in un-

usual staccato. I glanced furtively about and saw, in the distance, the dining-room in an unwonted aspect. Gone was the great black walnut table with its all-encompassing cloth, gone was the filigree carved sideboard with its brown marble top, and gone were the leather-seated, over-ornate walnut chairs. Several of the pictures had vanished from the walls — etchings in white frames and tinted photographs of Venice — likewise the flowered wall-paper and carpet! I entered a room strikingly simple in its elegance, strikingly effective in its beauty. Upon the dark, green-toned walls hung several family portraits which for years had been resting, face to the wall, in the attic. The frames were newly gilded,

but in gilt of a lusterless, subdued tone. Upon the floor was a soft-hued, green, patternless carpet, enframed in a hard-wood border. The new — but evidently old — buffet rested upon six slender legs with fine lines of white holly inlay upon them. Each of the three top drawers had a panel of light mahogany and carved brass handles. In the center were two cupboards flanked by bottle drawers, and on each side were large and deep drawers for linen. All were paneled in light mahogany, outlined with inlaid satin-wood and had brass handles. It was a Hepplewhite!

The table, not concealed in damask but with dainty linen doilies upon its

polished top, was also slender-legged, of mahogany, and with thin lines of satinwood inlay relieving its simplicity.

"The chairs," said my aunt, "are Sheraton, fan backs, not original, but excellent copies, made in England and sent to Virginia probably after the Revolution. Their red leather seats are new, of course. Old Pierre found them in Elizabeth and put them in thorough order. The serving-table is Empire, but it is light and delicate in design and isn't out of place with the rest. The brass inlay rather corresponds with the satinwood inlay in the other pieces. It was painted black and used for nails and bolts in a wood-shed when he found it.

"But," I exclaimed, "has your ship come in or are you just reckless?"

"The room cost just seventy-eight dollars in cash," said my aunt. "I got the buffet for twenty dollars, the two walnut bureaus, the refrigerator, and the oak china closet. The table cost fifteen dollars and the old walnut table, the side table, four pictures, and the black marble clock with the bronze statuette. The serving-table cost sixteen dollars, the old buffet, and the dining-room chairs. The new chairs cost twelve dollars, the old carpet, the ebony easel, the cherry mantel bric-a-bric shelf, and the two walnut single bedsteads. The wall-paper and the new carpet don't count as I had to have those

anyway," she said with truly feminine logic. "And the frame man got fifteen dollars and some old curtains. Isn't it worth the price?"

I looked about the room again. Then I bowed low over my aunt's hand and kissed it. The microbe had spread its contagion and I became a victim.

## II

### I GET THE BETTER OF MY AUNT IN A BARGAIN

IN another part of town from the pleasant emporium of Old Pierre and Young Pierre was a dilapidated story-and-a-half cottage bearing the sign "Old Curiosity Shop." On the porch were a few shabby pieces of furniture. What might be inside I had never speculated upon, as, until I caught the microbe of the Old Furniture Craze from my aunt, after she had shown me her transformed dining-room, I was not interested in the subject.

As the fever developed I became conscious of two truths.

One was that this new interest in Americana — old furniture, old silver and china, heirlooms and ancestors — was welding into our national character that element of veneration which previously had been sadly lacking. It was teaching us a new respect for our elders, our parents, and our established institutions. It was something deeper and better than a mere fad, this awakening appreciation of the beautiful fabrications of yesterday. The furniture of our colonial period was worthy of admiration because it was really beautiful. There was a grace in its lines, an honesty in its cabinet work, that were totally lacking

in the ornate and hideous furniture of a generation ago. The old furniture love was but a phase of that larger interest seen in the upbuilding of our various patriotic and ancestral societies. Old homesteads were ransacked for records, the archives of town halls searched, old wills, inventories, portraits, letters, laces, brocades and furniture were rescued from the oblivion of dusty attics and again became cherished in the family. The days when modern matrons had old four-posters chopped up for kindling-wood — and I personally had heard of just such tragedies — were happily past. And so what I had scoffingly called a craze — this old furniture interest — was really a return to sanity.

The second truth which dawned upon me was that this cult was of immense practical good because it was not only sweeping out the heterogeneous furnishings from our better types of homes and replacing them with simpler and more beautiful objects of usefulness and ornament, but it was teaching modern furniture makers to study classic forms and to copy them. If one had not the time nor inclination to collect old pieces, he could buy beautiful new ones patterned after the French Empire or the three Louis schools, or after the masters of English ones — Adam, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and Chippendale. In other words, the meretricious was being driven out by the beautiful.

Thrilled with the majesty of these grand thoughts I opened the front door of the little Old Curiosity Shop and, leaving my base-born prejudices behind me with the dust of the street upon the door-mat, as it were, I entered into a new world, filled with the furniture of an older one.

The microbe was firmly planted in my system.

A bright little man with white hair, but a face youthful because it was animated, looked up from a table he was cutting loose from its burlap and exclaimed in greeting:

"There! Look at it! Carved mahogany under the paint. Dolphins for legs.

And I only paid nine dollars for it! Wouldn't sell it for thirty-five dollars."

His greeting gave me the pleasant feeling that I was already one initiated, a brother collector and therefore to be confided in. No mere shopman he, with cold eye measuring the financial stature of a customer, but a collector to whom all other collectors were welcome. I felt at once a connoisseur. Ah! If my aunt could see me now, viewing critically but approvingly this broken and blackened object.

"Beautiful," I pronounced judicially. "A good specimen. But the—er—top?" Most of the top was missing.

"I'll find one for it some day. Meanwhile—" and the man scratched away a

bit of paint and varnish, wet his finger, rubbed it on the scar, and a flush, red as blood, shone forth.

About me was a discouraging jumble of clocks, tables, bureaus, mirrors, brass candlesticks and dismantled sofas, quite dusty and piled in together so closely that there was hardly a piece wholly visible. I examined a mirror with a gilt frame. It had scallopy sort of columns on the sides and a cornice overhead. The glass was divided by a gilt strip near the top and a crudely painted picture was in the upper part. I remembered that the furniture books described this kind as "Empire."

"A fine old mirror," I remarked genially.

The white-haired man glanced up from his scraping.

"Copy," he said, and resumed his work.

I moved hastily into the inner room and came face to face with a tall clock which looked to me the twin of the one my aunt found. Instantly I was filled with a passion, remorseless, unswerving, indomitable, to possess that clock for a less price than my aunt had paid — in cash — for hers. She had paid only twenty dollars, but I must humble her pride. Everything else vanished into the background, the glass-knobbed chests of drawers, the oval frames without pictures, the haircloth-covered chairs and the broken sofa; the clock stood forth compelling, aloof, magnificent. True

there was another clock that I personally would have preferred. It had a delicate line of inlay forming a panel on the tall, narrow door opening into the pendulum apartment, and its silver face was beautifully engraved, without spandrels. It bore the name and date, "Daniel Burnap, Andover, Ct., 1785." But all that was a detail. The other was surely like my aunt's.

I called the man and inquired the price.

"That clock," he replies, eying it affectionately, "was made in Springfield, by Jacob Sargent, a hundred years ago. The works are of brass and the face has the moon's phases and calendar. I wanted one hundred and twenty five dollars for it,

but it has been here two years for some reason, and you can have it for ninety dollars."

"Do you exchange for other furniture," I asked.

"Certainly, but I must have part cash."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," I exclaimed. "I want that clock and I want several other things I see here, but for this particular purchase I can't pay more than nineteen dollars in cash, but I'll be generous on the exchange."

We will not go into the details of that exchange. The man came that evening to my home and, as he appraised one offering after another, the amount needed

to fill the gap between nineteen and ninety crawled up with such astonishing slowness that I began to wonder if I were not paying on too large a policy for my furniture insurance. But as I watched the white-haired man drive away under cover of the night with his well-filled wagon, and then turned and closed the door and looked triumphantly up at the tall, slender clock, its polished mahogany sides glowing in the lamplight and its brass eagle perched gloriously aloft, I began to anticipate with fervent delight the moment when I should reveal it to my aunt and tell her I had paid for it one dollar less — in cash — than she had for hers.

## III

### MY AUNT GETS THE BETTER OF ME

I HAD passed my protracted and somewhat expensive novitiate when I discovered the Scrutoir. My home had a chastened appearance inside. Many pieces, once costly, but, when regarded with enlightenment, unbeautiful, had disappeared and the various rooms had gradually taken on an aspect which would have caused my Revolutionary ancestors, were they to visit me in the flesh, to feel singularly at home and to conclude that the world had not changed so much

after all. The white-haired man of the Old Curiosity Shop now had a seemingly genuine respect for me and secured far less merchandise in the exchange than at his first masterly haul *in re* the tall clock. I sat with him now and then before the open Franklin stove, of a late winter afternoon, and discussed values. I had somewhat familiarized myself with the antique shops of New York and had made one or two visits to those of Brooklyn and Philadelphia, and learned that, while in the cities there was a fairly uniform system of prices, the old man based his somewhat on the price he had paid for the various pieces. Thus, he would price two sofas of great smilarity at forty and

eighty-five dollars respectively, because he had paid nine dollars for one and thirty dollars for the other. There was no mathematical proportion between what he paid and what he asked because he always scraped, patched, and repolished the pieces and, of course, some required far more work than others. In the city the price for either of these sofas, which were massive Empire-style ones with straight backs, unupholstered, would be about one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

I needed a desk for my den. A year ago I would have gone out and ordered a roll-top one sent home. But now the realization of the fact that I really needed a desk stole over me with a delicious sense

of a new pleasure in store. It meant a quest. I needed, not *a* desk, but *the* desk, the one, soul-satisfying, perfectly appropriate finishing touch to the room. Life at once took on a fairer aspect. The world became what it is to the joyous eyes of youth, full of possibilities.

The Old Curiosity Shop had desks, but not the one for me. So it happened that I poached upon my aunt's preserves. Hitherto she had remained faithful to Old Pierre and Young Pierre and I had been loyal to the Old Curiosity Shop. But one day, when I had been making a visit to my aunt to see an enormous, upholstered easy-chair she had secured, I mentioned the present object of my life and I caught

a fleeting expression in her eyes which caused the thought to flash into my mind that a visual image of the thing I described had mirrored itself in them. And she changed the conversation with suspicious promptness and made an entirely unnecessary confession, evidently to distract my attention. She remarked that she had come to the painful conclusion that my tall clock was really a better one than hers. Hers was not an eight-day one as she had believed, but ran down with great regularity just short of six days. The clockmaker had examined its works and swore they were eight-day ones and in perfect condition, and that the clock shouldn't run down in less time than that. But this

only added mystery to the situation without helping it.

But I was thinking of desks, not clocks, and remembering my aunt's expression when I had mentioned the subject, I decided to carry the war into the enemy's country and I visited the emporium of Old Pierre and Young Pierre. And there, of course, I found my Scrutoir.

It had a bookcase top of three shelves, with glass-paneled doors and tiny sashes with Gothic arches. Below these and just above the desk drawer were innumerable pigeon holes concealed with plain wood doors with veneered panels of rich, "tree calf" grain. The desk drawer had a green felt pad top which slid back as

only old desk-drawers can slide, and below it was a space for writing paper. Underneath this were three generous drawers with glass knobs and exceedingly handsome grain. The piece was mahogany, well refinished in dull tone.

Young Pierre extolled its beauties, but his oratory was unnecessary. The Scrutoir spoke for itself. He came gently down from one hundred and ten dollars to one hundred dollars, ninety dollars, seventy-five dollars, and seventy dollars to sixty-five dollars and stuck there. He would take fifty-five dollars in cash and ten dollars in exchange, and I thought of a mantel-board with mirror backs and bric-a-brac shelves I no longer needed.

But I decided not to close with him at once, hoping to get him to take another furl in his sail if I came again.

The next afternoon on my way home from business I stopped there, and my heart sank as I saw that the desk was gone. Young Pierre was away for the day on an old furniture hunt and Old Pierre met me with impassive countenance. He did not know that I had been there and had bargained for it yesterday, and he had that very morning sold it, he said, to one of his customers who had taken a sudden fancy for it. And she had sent an expressman for it barely two hours ago.

Moodily and in deep dejection I took myself home. It was a cold, desolate

winter's day. The skies glowered and the road lay dark and lonesome before me. I pictured myself entering the house and seeing the blank space in the den which I had, the evening before, cleared for this new prize. I entered the house silently, put my coat on the console-table, which until now always gave me a thrill of joy, entered my den and turned up the light.

There, in the space I had so lovingly prepared, stood the Scrutoir, harmonizing with the room yet dominating it in its dignity and beauty. The polished panels glowed like wine in the light and its tiny sashed glass doors seemed to sparkle a joyous welcome to me. Dazed, I ap-

proached it and saw a note, addressed to me, lying upon its partly opened desk drawer. It was from my aunt.

"Instinct tells me," it read, "that you have already seen this little token of my affection for you. Did you bargain for it with Young Pierre? His father thought some one had spoken to him about it yesterday but didn't know if he talked of prices. I paid him fifty dollars in cash for it and took the liberty of sending him your old cherry mantel-board to complete the payment, as I remembered you said you wanted to get rid of it."

## IV

### THE HOMESICK MANTELPIECE

I LET myself into my bachelor home late one afternoon on my return from town with a pleasant feeling of expectancy. A few days previously I had been passing through Elizabeth in my motor and happened upon a quaint old house which they were just about to demolish. I alighted and went inside, entirely out of curiosity, and there, in the little parlor on the right of the hall, was an exquisite old, white-painted mantelpiece, into which a couple of Hibernian work-

men were just about to insert their cold chisels.

With a Woodman-spare-that-tree impulse, I stayed their hands, looked up the "boss" and for a modest pecuniary compensation I succeeded in arranging to have it carefully removed by a cabinet-maker and shipped home to me. It was a dainty bit of architecture, standing shoulder high. The edge of the shelf was ornamented with a hand-carved beading, and just beneath it, where its inner side met the supporting cornice, was a delicate egg-and-dart moulding. The broad, simple cornice was decorated only with a medallion in the center, representing an American shield with an eagle on it, forming the

center of a group of crossed swords and half-furled flags, all carved in high relief. This cornice was supported on each side of the wide fireplace opening by a square, deep-fluted pilaster, and the ends of the mantel were held up by slender and graceful columns. Over each pilaster and column was an old medallion, two with carved fruit pieces and two of slender urns. Behind it, on each side of the chimney, was a dear little cupboard for books or pipes or other accessories of good cheer. But it was the proportions of the mantelpiece that made it especially charming.

So, to-day, as I let myself into my house, I hoped to find this gem, saved

from the wreck. And there it was, carefully removed from its burlap and dusted off by my faithful Jap, leaning against one of the built-in bookcases in my library. I divested myself of my wraps and, lighting a cigarette, sank luxuriously into a lounge-chair and glanced comfortably about me. Surely the bachelor's estate was decidedly the most reasonable and logical one in this modern life. No household cares, — my little establishment was perfectly run by my two Japanese boys, — no responsibilities, no ties. I was free to go and come as I pleased. What a preposterous idea that was of young Carlton's to get married! As a bachelor on a small salary and no independent

means, he was full of possibilities. He could have kicked over the traces at any time and tried his luck in South America or California or Africa, to return, perhaps a gold mine owner or a Peruvian general or ranchman. All up for that sort of thing now! He would probably forge ahead in time, but with horrible slowness, and there was no let-up in the meantime. And all because a girl with trustful eyes looked at him a few times and said she believed in him! I threw away the cigarette and rang for my slippers. I should take a comfortable half-hour to myself before dressing for dinner. A couple of fellows were coming in for it.

I looked proudly at the new mantel

leaning against the bookcases and tried to imagine it a home hearth-side. A coal fire would be glowing in it and my wife would be sitting near me. Black hair or brown? Brown and wavy. Young, of course, slender, pretty house-dress, pink with some of that puckered up, popcorn-like trimming. She would drop her scissors. I would pick them up. She is knitting or embroidering or something, — perhaps darning my — no, she would not do that in the evening — probably something with a hoop stretching out part of it.

"No special news in town," I say. "Cook is going to leave, eh?" Um — Did the plumber mend the laundry leak? Yes, it *is* time the sweet peas were planted.

Do you remember, dear — or darling — no, 'dear' is better — do you remember, dear, that afternoon we paddled out on Lake Placid together and I read Lanier to you? — Yes, — yes, — yes, — lovely, wasn't it? How good it is to have you all to myself here in our own little home with the fire burning on the hearth! Yes, I ordered the coal yesterday. Do you remember how we used to —"

It was rather an attractive picture. I regarded the mantel critically in its temporary resting-place. Then I looked around at the bachelor den with its upholstered easy-chairs, its pipe-racks and big table piled with magazines and a few favorite books. Somehow the place

seeemd a trifle lonesome to-night. It was that beastly mantel, probably a little homesick itself, in its new environment. Poor old chap! What scenes of homely cheer and contentment it had looked out upon during its long life! It was a left over from simpler and less sophistocated days. It seemed a trifle brutal to have it scraped and enameled and set up in my billiard room. I felt a sudden sympathy for it, ruthlessly torn from a home and set up in a modern bachelor's establishment. Yes, perhaps it was a little lonesome at times! — Still, — and thus ruminating I took myself up-stairs to dress for dinner.

# V

## IN WHICH ALL RULES FOR TRADE ARE OVERTURNED

MY aunt asked me to come down to her house as she had, she telephoned me, solved the mystery as to why the tall clock which she had purchased — the one which had goaded me to buy a similar one — ran down every six days instead of running for eight. I was curious to know, so I went at once. She asked me to open the long door to the pendulum compartment, and put my head inside. I got down on my hands and

knees, and, though it hurt my ears, I got my head in. It was dark in there and I saw nothing, so withdrew it.

"Tap the bottom," said my aunt, "and you will see that it is a false one."

I did so and it sounded hollow. Examination with a candle revealed the fact that the bottom had been inserted at a later period than that of the making of the imposing timepiece. There was undoubtedly a compartment concealed beneath it!

"Long ago," said my aunt, in an excited tone, "before safe deposit vaults were known, our ancestors used to conceal their valuables in out-of-the-way places, sometimes in the brick fireplaces, sometimes in

the well, sometimes in a hollow log and sometimes in massive pieces of furniture. That false bottom was put in the clock for that purpose and Old Pierre hadn't discovered it when he sold it to me. I can't open it without putting the clock over on its side. It needs a man with a few tools to take out the works first."

"Perhaps the treasure is still there," I exclaimed — "Sheffield plate, old documents, daguerreotypes, silver!"

"Perhaps," quod my aunt, "some day we will open it. And now I want you to take me to Mendham this afternoon. Old Pierre has just inadvertently let fall a secret. He told me the name of the place in Mendham where he has bought several

pieces of old furniture. And if Old Pierre bought them, he bought them cheap. There is a highboy there for sale, and if you want it we must go at once."

It was a glorious midwinter day. The sun shone in a cloudless sky, the roads were frozen hard and were free from snow. It was very early in the afternoon and Mendham was scarcely twenty-five miles away. So presently, comfortably wrapped in furs, we were spinning along the wide Macadam road on our new quest.

"Your Old Curiosity Shop man told me the other day," remarked my aunt, "that the old wing chair with claw and ball feet which he is asking thirty dollars for, unrepaired and unupholstered, he got

from a carpenter who had done some work for him. The carpenter said he had a dilapidated old chair at home and would be glad to get rid of it. The Old Curiosity Shop man went down and looked at it. It was covered with calico and somewhat broken, but he saw at once that it was a good piece and worth at least thirty dollars just as it stood

"'What a shabby old chair!' he exclaimed artfully.

"'Yes,' said the carpenter, 'I don't suppose it is worth four or five dollars to you, is it?'

"'Well,' said the Old Curiosity Shop man, 'it will take a lot of fixing over, but

I'll give you three dollars and a half for it!' And he got it."

"I call that downright dishonest," I cried, indignantly. That is one thing that disgusts me in this collecting mania. People lose all moral sense in making bargains. Here was a chair really worth thirty dollars, and just because the owner didn't know it, the dealer cheated him. He might at least have given him fifteen for it and been satisfied with a hundred per cent commission."

"I think myself," admitted my aunt, "that that last fifty cents was rather mean. But I am a woman and I suppose all women love bargains."

"Still," I argued, "you would never be

so rapacious as that. It is all well enough to beat the dealers down all you can, for it is a case of your wits against theirs and I don't object to buying a piece cheap from an ignorant owner if he doesn't know the value, but squeezing them down like that, making them think a piece has no value when you know it has, and while they trust somewhat to your representations, and then walking off with it almost for nothing is downright piracy. "Besides," I concluded, "it's small and mean."

"But think of the pleasure of telling people what a bargain you have made!" said my aunt, argumentatively.

"If they were the right kind of people they wouldn't admire you for it," I said.

"There is an ethical difference between a clever bargain and an avaricious cut-throat one. And it puzzles me how respectable people can brag about how they have hoodwinked honest country people into parting with their things almost for nothing. I should think they would be ashamed to speak of it even if they were mean enough to do so. And you would be the last one to do it yourself, too, and you know it."

"No one knows what one would do at the critical moment," she said, sententiously. "How do *I* know what *you* might do," she continued, "under strong temptation?"

With such wise discourse as this did

we improve our minds as we sped along through the keen air, till, sweeping over the hills of Bernardsville, with its great country houses closed up for the winter, the flower gardens buried in straw, and the spacious and ornate stables deserted, we spied the walls of Mendham across the fields and presently were inquiring of a villager the whereabouts of "Greystone."

When we drew up before its door we found it to be a delightful old gable-roof house of smooth-cut brown stone, evidently constructed just prior to the Revolution, with solid panel shutters, small-paned windows and a white enameled door with highly polished brass knocker upon it, a lunette window above, narrow ones at

each side, and pew seats extending out on each side of the low "stoop" to graceful columns supporting the half-circle porch roof. Up from the white picket front fence extended a brick path to the door, with flower beds on each side, now hidden well under dry, frost-rimed leaves.

A trim, white-capped housemaid admitted us into a wide hall, at the rear of which a back door evidently opened upon the garden in the rear and an orchard in the distance. We seated ourselves in the parlor on the right and uttered suppressed exclamations of wonder and delight. The rooms were simply crowded with magnificent old furniture in perfect order, and

upon the walls hung glorious old gilt-framed mirrors and oil portraits softened and enriched in tone by the lapse of many years. Miss Greylock entered presently, a slender, white-haired, delicate-looking gentlewoman in soft black silk. She seemed slightly embarrassed when my aunt stated the commercial reason of our call, and said hesitatingly:

"Why, yes, I have a few old pieces of furniture which I rather want to sell, but I hardly know the value of them. The highboy you speak of is in the rear of the hall," and she led the way out under the stairway landing which was over the rear door. My aunt and I gazed at the piece in silent rapture. It was very large

and of most elaborate workmanship. My aunt judged that its date was about 1730. The lower part was supported by slightly curving carved legs with claw and ball feet, the small central lower drawer was ornamented with the familiar shell and scroll designs. On each side of it were two small square drawers, and above it a long, narrow one. The upper part consisted of three large drawers and five smaller ones, not counting a square one, also carved in the shell and scroll pattern, which was between the fine curves, rising to end in what is called the broken-arch cornice. Above the cornice in the center was a deeply carved torch. The lines of the piece were graceful, the drawers were

"overlapping," the handles of ancient, burnished brass and the whole piece of richly grained mahogany.

"What — what is the price of it, please?" stammered my aunt, also a trifle embarrassed at talking business, and struggling valiantly to suppress her enthusiasm.

"Really," said our gentle hostess, "I know so little of the values. I think," and she turned with a winning smile towards us, "that if you really want it, I will let you make the price. It is really not worth very much, I imagine," and she led the way back into the front parlor.

Now was I indeed tempted of the devil. Here was not only a wonderful chance to acquire a superb highboy, but to make the

real overwhelming bargain of my life. What joy to discover this noble piece to my envious and jealous friends and then gloat over them as I named an insignificant figure as the price I had paid for it. This gentle lady had placed herself entirely at my mercy. I felt a suddenly awakened understanding of the attitude of mind of the Old Curiosity Shop man when he paid three dollars and a half for the wing-back chair. After all, this was a commercial world we live in, and if the seller was satisfied — I do not say that I would have taken undue advantage of this old lady's innocence, but this seething, surging impulse overwhelmed me at that instant and held me trembling in its grasp.

I came face to face with a tall clock (*Page 19*)

I have since then searched my soul to determine how I would have acted had not a totally unexpected and miraculous event transpired. I have never known how to decide the question.

The unexpected and miraculous event was that, at this portentous instant an angel came to the rescue of my soul and saved me the agony of deciding how to act. We three were standing near the front parlor window, I with my back to it, so that my vision commanded the room and the back parlor which was divided from it by a wide folding door. Into this back room there came from the rear hall, quietly and in innocence of the high mission of her coming, a woman, — a young

and beautiful woman, dressed — oh, how do I know! it was light in color and clothed her graceful figure in exquisite lines, and her brown hair seemed suddenly to catch the fireglow from the wood fire beneath the mantel. Seeing us, she hesitated. The old lady turned and called:

"Cynthia, dear!"

The angel approached through the doorway, and after the little formality of introductions were made, seeing that we were discussing something, she retired to the fireplace beyond the doorway.

Gone were my ignoble temptations! All the world was generous and full of kindly love.

I side-stepped.

"If you and my aunt will arrange the price," I said genially, "whatever you decide upon will be entirely satisfactory to me."

A moment later I had wandered across the room, leaving the two ladies sitting together upon the davenport, and was helping Cynthia to stir the log fire.

After a time — it may have been a short time, it may have been quite long — we discovered they were drinking tea and, at their call, joined them. The two ladies seemed to come back reluctantly from more congenial themes to the business of the day.

"Bruce," said my aunt, "Miss Greylock has recently come into possession, through

the death of a distant relative, of a number of pieces of old furniture and, her home being already well filled with it, she finds herself embarrassed at having so much. Her niece, Miss Cynthia, who is visiting her and who lives near Boston — Salem, did you say? — has her home also filled with it, and Miss Greylock has no one to whom she cares to give it. But she sadly undervalues it as to price," she added.

"Most of my furniture was inherited," explained Miss Greylock. "I was born and brought up in this house, furnished just as it is, and I am really quite ignorant of the commercial side of the question. Your aunt and I have discovered some mutual friends, so I know who you are,"

and she smiled delightfully, "and I really wish you would arrange the price to suit yourself. But your aunt insists that I name a price for the highboy. Very well! Twenty-five dollars."

"Twenty-five dollars," I exclaimed, aghast. "Why, I should never think of paying any price like that! It's worth over a hundred!"

"Oh, I am sure you are mistaken," said Miss Greylock, "I could not think for a moment of taking anything like that. The veneer is chipped, the piece would have to be entirely done over — besides, it is not a very fine piece. I have much better ones up-stairs."

Here was a state of affairs indeed! The

eager buyer haggling for a rare piece and heatedly demanding to pay more than the seller wanted to take, and the seller as eagerly decrying her wares! My aunt and Miss Greylock — her name was also Greylock — Cynthia Greylock — may I say it again? — it is such a — well, never mind — looked on exchanging amused smiles and comments as my hostess and myself bargained over the teacups. By dint of masterly work on my part, meeting her arguments with stronger ones, I finally succeeded in getting her up, by gradual steps, to fifty dollars, and there she became adamant.

As my aunt and I drove away homeward, the superb highboy was mine. I still felt

a lingering regret at the price and an uneasy questioning as to whether I ought not to have squeezed the seller up another peg.

"Well," said my aunt, as the great lamps of the motor bored holes in the darkness before us, "you lived nobly up to your convictions."

But I did not feel much elated at the compliment. I thought of those surging, seething emotions which whelmed me for those awful moments previous to the vision in the back parlor. And I questioned myself seriously, very seriously.

## VI

### TOPSY-TURVY BARGAINS

IT was several days before the highboy arrived from Mendham — very impatient days for me. I had sent it to be done over and the delay seemed interminable. The Old Curiosity Shop and the emporium of Old Pierre and Young Pierre had lost, to me, their fascination and I longed for the glowing pieces in the little gray stone house tucked away among the New Jersey hills, for the cozy parlor and the subdued old portraits, and for the cheery glow of the back parlor fire. I

wanted to tell Miss Greylock — and her niece — how the highboy looked amid its new surroundings.

When it came it was the glory of my second-story hall, and the following afternoon I was speeding toward Mendham. This time I neglected to invite my aunt to accompany me. Miss Greylock received me with charming grace and showed me several other pieces she was willing to dispose of. Among them was a bureau of unusually rich mahogany and carving. In discussing it I had an opportunity to show off, for her benefit, some of my newly acquired knowledge about old furniture. The bureau, as we now use the word, I explained to her, meaning a chest

of drawers with a mirror on top, is a comparatively modern piece of furniture. It is an evolution from the simple Dutch chest which later was arranged with drawers to pull out, instead of a heavy lid to lift up. Later still, in the seventeenth century, the top drawer was arranged as a desk and the word "bureau" probably comes from the French word *burrel* or *bureau*, a kind of coarse-woven cloth which covered the early specimens before fine, polished woods were used. When the little mirror-stands with a tiny drawer or two were introduced, and were stood upon these bureau-desks, some one hit upon the happy idea of making them a part of it and thus the modern dressing-

table came into being, after two or three centuries of evolution.

I did not especially need a bureau but required some practical errand for my call, and, of course, like potted meat, it would be "handy to have in the house." Besides, this really was a beautiful specimen. The mirror was supported by two outward-curving supports, the drawers were bordered with a delicate line of inlay, and each front edge was embellished with a deeply carved column.

Again Miss Greylock and I differed as to price. She demanded thirty dollars for it while I stuck at sixty. She had not the excuse that it was in disrepair, for its soft-grained sides glowed like the back of a

well-groomed chestnut horse, and its round, brass handles shone like gold. We sat in the front parlor bargaining over it after we had come in from the extension behind the kitchen where it was stored. Her niece had come in from out-of-doors, her cheeks glowing with the cold, and when we began to talk business she removed her furs and outer wraps and retired to the fireplace in the back parlor, the spot where I had first seen her, on the momentous occasion of my first visit the previous week. She took up a book and opened it. It must have been an amusing one, for I saw her laughing quietly to herself over it from time to time as we talked, — though I did not notice her turning any of the pages.

"No indeed," said her aunt, firmly, "I really do not think the bureau is worth more than thirty dollars. I fear you have an entirely erroneous idea of these old pieces."

"But, my dear Miss Greylock," I expostulated, "such a piece would bring a hundred dollars or one hundred and twenty-five anywhere in the city. I know, for I have bought considerable old furniture lately, and you could get fifty or sixty for it from a dealer. Why should you sacrifice it to me? Let me pay you sixty for it."

"It might not be quite so pleasant having to bargain with a dealer," was the reply. "Let us compromise at forty."

"A fair compromise between thirty and

sixty would be forty-five," I maintained firmly, and so, at last, it was settled that way. Then I succeeded in buying a small haircloth-covered sofa, and then, Miss Greylock excusing herself and retiring up-stairs, I found myself sitting beside Cynthia while she brewed a pot of delicate Indian tea before the fire in the back parlor. Before her aunt left, however, in answer to a note I bore from my aunt, the ladies had accepted an invitation to lunch with her in Orange the following week.

Miss Cynthia glanced at me demurely as she handed me my tea.

"Are you really fond of old furniture," she asked, "or is it because your aunt likes it so much?"

"I caught the fever for it, in the first place, from her," I replied, "and thought I appreciated it fairly well before I came here. But" — and I glanced about the rooms with their rich ancestral pieces and then looked at her, the heir of generations of good furniture-lovers, with the ancient white paneled mantelpiece behind her. "I never realized its true beauties till now. Since the fever has now become chronic, won't you be my medical adviser and see me safely through it?"

Cynthia laughed archly.

"I really think you do need some one to look after you, if you bargain with other people the way you do with my aunt. I think it has gone to your head. Is that

the way you transact business in New York?"

I smiled as I tried to imagine how absurd my topsy-turvy bargaining must have sounded to a third party. "Perhaps I might, if I dealt with people as charming as your aunt. It must sound rather funny. What would you prescribe?"

"Take a course in modern ware as an antidote. Go to a Sixth Avenue store where they sell stamped cotton plush, stained wood 'parlor sets' for forty-nine fifty, marked down from fifty dollars, and price their stamped oak Morris chairs and Brussels carpets."

I shuddered at the awful thought. "You must belong to the old school of

practitioners," I replied; "your prescription is very heroic. I don't know that I should like you — as a doctor." And I incontinently took myself off.

# VII

## THE ROCOCO LADY AND THE HIGHLY VARNISHED GENTLEMAN

"I HAVE invented a new profession," I remarked suddenly.

"What is it?" Cynthia asked.

We were bowling along between Madison and Morristown on a glorious, early spring mid-afternoon. The forest trees were still dark and bare, but a faint green had suffused the orchards and the first burgeon of spring was noticeable. Cynthia had been down to Orange to lunch with my aunt, and I had come out from

town early in order to take her home in my motor.

"Furniturosophy," I replied. "There are phrenologists who read human character by the head, palmists who read it by the hand, and chirogrophists who determine it by the handwriting. Why not a Furniturosophist or Furniturographist, who will tell it by the furniture one has in his house? What is more intimately connected with one's life than the furniture he uses daily? It must have a distinct influence on his character, just as the character of a person is expressed in the furniture he likes.

"For instance," I continued, noticing a faintly mocking aspect in the merriment

that shone in my companion's eyes, "look at that big, ornate stone house on the left, with its marble lions on the porch steps, stained to look antique, its terra-cotta well-head standing meaninglessly in the middle of the lawn with no path approaching it, its general air of aggressive opulence. Can't you imagine how it looks inside? Drawing-rooms, Louis Something; Dining-room, Renaissance; hall, Jacobean; with everything carried to the limit, and with brocades and tapestries everywhere. And the people! The master, Grand Rapids imitation of Georgian; plenty of light, new mahogany veneered on soft wood; apt to chip and warp if too closely tested, but effective and looking

almost like the real. His wife, a combination of Elizabethan and Renaissance — façade ornate; nothing simple-colonial about her, — all brocades, upholstery and marquetry inlay. Her daughter, — Rococo, though a trifle toned down; figure graceful but with much ornament overlaid — like an ormulu table, for instance, or a bulle clock."

"With claw and ball feet?" inquired Cynthia.

"If she has claws, she inherited them from her father," I answered, "though clocks don't have ball feet."

"Striking?"

"Yes, striking," I said; "rather an alarm clock in some ways and runs a

trifle fast. And here's a little house," I continued, warming up to my theme, "where the people are as sterling and sound and elegant as their inherited mahogany which, I am sure graces the rooms inside. Can't you imagine the library with real books in it, — not the near literature variety, — the cozy tea-table with simple old silver, well polished, the piano with good music piled about it, the few pictures, all well chosen, and the air of culture and homeliness and quiet beauty?"

Cynthia looked back at it interestedly — we were running very slowly.

"Yes," she said, "and the lady of the house is gracious and charming, I am sure. She is rather young and whatever

she wears looks well on her. She probably sings a little — to her friends and household only — Brahms and Schumann — and her children are well mannered and well cared for. Her husband is probably a professional man and belongs to the Mayflower Society."

"I know a man," I said, pleased that my brilliant idea was so well received, "who always reminds me of a rich old sideboard, well polished and ruddy of hue, complacent with many good viands stowed away, a repository of much good old port and sherry, inclined to groan with the delicacies of the season, and at his best at dinner time. I can fancy him standing before his mahogany prototype and ex-

changing knowing winks with it over a glass of Burgundy, and reminiscences of earlier and gallant days, of many congenial good livers they have known."

"And I know a dear old lady," said Cynthia, "who is exactly like a black walnut 'what-not.' Do you know what a 'what-not' is? One of those triangular corner stands with shelves holding what were considered curios a generation ago, — a big sea shell with pink lining, a piece of American Indian shell and bead work, a photograph of Uncle Ezra and Cousin Lottie in a 'rustic' frame, and a few books such as 'Gems of Sacred Song' and 'The Orators' Garland.' She doesn't date back to the aristocratic mahogany period, nor is

she in touch with what is called modern society, with a large S. She stands modestly in the corner and looks silently on at what is going on about her and is seldom noticed. She would be rather embarrassed with much attention, in fact is perfectly contented in her corner. She is a left-over from our transition, mansard-roof-and-Eastlake-furniture period. Yes, I like your idea, Furniturosophy. I think there is something in it."

"There is a lot in it!" I cried enthusiastically. "Look back in history and see how furniture reflected the spirit of the times, the picturesque, — rudely carved chairs of the Northmen, the bejeweled divans of medieval Turkey, the

pomp and gold of the French Empire, the —"

"The totem poles of Alaska?" interrupted Cynthia.

"Of course," said I, "and the bronze tables and lamps of Pompeii."

"I often think," mused Cynthia, "of the influence that the beautiful, imported furniture which was brought home to Salem, where I live, must have had,—a distinctly refining influence on the families of the merchant-sailor captains. In my great-grandfather's day the harbor was busy with wharves and shipping. Great white-winged clippers sailed away to the East Indies and brought home rich cargoes to make prosperous the families of the

ship-owners. And, with increasing wealth, they brought back fine old inlaid furniture from Holland, mirrors from France, and what we now call colonial mahogany, Sheffield plate, gold and copper luster and silver from England. In those days cheap, manufactured furniture was not made. If people were not rich they did not fill their houses with cheap and gaudy stuff. They had little, but what they had was good. The sea captains remained, many of them, bluff and rough till they died, but their wives and sons and daughters lived amid graceful Hepplewhite or Sheraton or Chippendale furniture, dining-tables not varnished but polished each day by hand, beds with carved posts well draped,

comfortable davenports and wing-back chairs, dignified tables and lamps with cut-glass pendants. Many of the captains, too, were cultured gentlemen. My great-grandfather was."

"He *must* have been," I murmured.

"Most of my neighbors," she continued, "live in large brick houses with columned porches, filled with mahogany, glass, and silver that is nowadays priceless. The beauty of it all grew into the lives of these people. They love all things that are good and beautiful and they treasure their old portraits and samplers and yellow laces. When the young people give fancy-dress affairs, the old costumes that come forth from old trunks and

cedar chests in the attics are wonderful."

"And your own home?" I asked.

"Is overflowing with it. That is why I don't mind my aunt selling the pieces more than I do, though I do mind a little, merely sentimentally, I suppose."

"Do you mind her disposing of them to *me?*" I inquired.

She glanced swiftly at me. Was it the wind tinting her cheek?

"Not so much to you as —"

"As what?"

She laughed softly.

"I know one or two families," she continued, smiling, "that sold most of their old mahogany about thirty-five years ago

and refurnished their houses with brand-new black walnut, Brussels carpets, and gorgeous, framed chromos, and they felt very superior to their neighbors because they were in the latest style."

"And speaking Furniturographically, how would you describe them?" I asked.

"Nickel-plated, highly varnished, with plush upholstery and chenille trimmings. They luxuriate best in a ready-made cozy corner, and when they die they will go to a celestial department store and be forever happy."

And we both laughed merrily as we rolled slowly into Mendham and stopped at the familiar gate.

## VIII

### WANTED: A SETTEE

WE were sitting before the back parlor fire one late afternoon. There had been a pause in the conversation and I broke it by remarking:

"The three-year-old boy of a friend of mine recently broke into the family dinner chat and said, 'Let's talk about —' then he paused and every one waited expectantly, 'Let us talk about pussy-cat's tails.' So, paraphrasing this line, let us talk about chandeliers."

"Why chandeliers?" asked Cynthia,

"why not peacocks, or churns, or the third Punic war, or button-holes?"

"Because I have just been watching the sunlight dance about on the prisms of that old cut-glass one, and I think it is the most beautiful thing imaginable. See the reds and purples flickering about those triangular pendants and the rosy flush on the clusters at the top. They tremble and shimmer like fragments of a rainbow lost in a — in a —"

"In a glacier," concluded Cynthia for me.

"Yes, thanks," I said.

In the center of the room hung a superb old cut-glass chandelier, like a symmetrical, golden bough covered with icicles.

The central tube was surrounded by strings of brilliants, curving slightly inward with their weight. The brilliants were cut in the shape of jewels with many facets, and they varied in size from half an inch at the top of the string to over an inch at the bottom. From the central rod extended twelve curving arms of polished brass, ending, six of them, in gas-jets and six in carved, crystal pinnacles. From each arm depended triangular crystal drops, each ending in a many-sided spear-point. Four circular gilt bands of varying diameter surrounded the base of the central rod, so that their hundreds of pendants formed an inverted cone, the point of which, at the bottom of all, was a solid,

spherical crystal the size of a pear. Around each gas-jet was a heavily cut globe, and from the lower rims a circle of pendants fell. Near the ceiling was another crown-like circular band, from which depended long, slender crystal drops.

Altogether it was a shimmering mass of gold and sunlight, for the rays of the setting sun, streaming recklessly into the room through the window, lost their way completely in its mazes, darting and wandering about, leaping panic-stricken from crystal to crystal, trying in vain to get out of their fairy-like prison.

"The chandelier," I said oracularly, "is a beacon light of the spirit of the times. I have looked in vain through all

the books on old furniture that I have, to find something on chandeliers. So I can't toss off nuggets of wisdom to you as to the chandeliers of colonial times, or of Louis XIV, or Erasmus, or Lorenzo the Magnificent, but I imagine those gentlemen didn't have gas or electricity. This cold, unromantic electricity, with its fierce unflickering glare, is in keeping with these tense, business-like times. Imagine a poet in his tower composing odes by the light turned on with a push button! And these modern, metallic, highly wrought fixtures are quite as unromantic as the light they support. Gas was almost as bad, and its accompanying bronze and brass abominations with their spirals and stamped

patterns were even worse. How much simpler and more beautiful were the candle-lighted rooms of colonial days, with the tapering yellow flames reflected softly on polished floors, stately mirrors, and shining mahogany. No wonder men were gallant and courtly and ladies winsome. By candle-light, it would seem in keeping for a man to bend low over his lady's hand and kiss her fingers in saying adieu. By electric light he would be more apt to say, "See you later!" without so much as a nod. Gas and electricity are cold, hard, relentless. Candle-light is full of illusions."

"And firelight?" asked Cynthia. It had grown dark outside. The captive

sunbeams had languished and died in prison and a soft, rosy glow came from the fireplace, lighting up Cynthia's face and glinting in her hair. She wore a soft gray gown of silk crepe and — oh well, it was just — a pretty dress, that's all.

"Firelight," I mused, "is the light of love. It is the light of the home, the fireside. I should like to ask the girl I loved to marry me, sitting beside her on a great, high-back settee before a fireplace with hickory logs — like those — crackling and glowing before me. I should like to tell her how once my great-grandfather sat thus upon a settee beside a young Puritan girl, after he had tramped ten

miles, musket in hand, across the snowy forests. The storm raged outside and soon he would have to go out into it again. But for that hour they two sat sweetly side by side on the settee, and he took her hand and told her how he loved her, how he had crept through scattered groups of hostile redcoats to tell her so. He asked her to marry him, simply and bravely as a man should, and he knelt and kissed her hand, when she said she would, before he rose and took her to his heart. Then she helped him on with his coat and leather gaiters and promised to be brave and wait for him, and he went out into the night and she had no word of him for months."

"And then?" asked Cynthia, softly.

"Then he came back, in the leafy spring, with a wounded arm and a commission from General Washington, and he married her in the village church and took her behind him on horseback to her new home."

Cynthia was sitting in a low rocker leaning slightly forward, looking eagerly at me as I talked. The fireglow was in her eyes and on her cheek. The room seemed very still and peaceful.

I looked around wistfully.

"Is there — is there a settee handy?" I asked.

Cynthia started and the fireglow deepened on her face.

"Light up the chandelier," she replied, "and we will see if it belongs to this era or not."

Soon the sparkling lights were dancing again in the shining maze, ghosts, perhaps, of the dead sunbeams, but not pale nor mournful ones.

"After all," mused Cynthia, "gas *is* rather pretty, isn't it, even if it is modern! I am afraid I am rather modern at heart in spite of my bringing up. Candle-light is picturesque but electricity is so convenient! I love the old furniture, of course, and yet I think modern ways are 'way ahead of old ones. I shouldn't like to have been my grandmother who, as a young girl, made samplers and did mar-

velous needlework, and who wore a cap at thirty. I am not an embroidery-and-rocking-chair girl at all, and I think the dear old lady would be shocked to see me doing my eighteen holes and not minding a sunburned nose. Yet with all their gentleness they had spirit, those New England grandmothers of ours. They could take terrible journeys on horseback and load the guns against the Indians when it was necessary! Perhaps their delicacy was only a cult after all, just as is our modern athleticism. Womankind and womanhood do not change much in a race, I imagine; it is only circumstances and conditions. And the same with men. I can imagine you in a continental uni-

form quite well! And because I love the excitement of a motor spin and can handle a twenty-foot catboat, it doesn't mean that I am essentially different from my grandmother."

"There is much wisdom in what you say," I pronounced judicially. "In fact — in fact — are you sure there isn't a settee handy?"

# IX

## THE FACE IN THE GIRANDOLE

OVER the mantelpiece in the back parlor of the Mendham house, to which I was now a frequent visitor, was an immense girandole which I had long coveted. The circular mirror in the center was perhaps two feet and a half in diameter and of brilliant quality, slightly convex and reflecting the face of one standing in front of it without contorting it. Surrounding the glass was a massive carved frame representing two inverted cornucopias, pouring out their fruit to form the

base. At the top, spreading its wings boldly between the tapering ends of the cornucopias which curved upward as gracefully as conventionalized dolphins, was a huge eagle. The entire frame was gilded and was in the style of Chippendale, but it was probably made a little after his time,—perhaps 1780. These girandoles were owned by wealthy families both in New England and in the South during our late colonial period, and though I had seen several of them, none could be compared to this. I wanted it for a particular place in my living-room, and though Cynthia's aunt and I had not quite met as to terms, she had named her maximum and I knew that, in the end, I would accept them.

She had one or two other good mirrors which I coveted too. One of them was made evidently in America after the Revolution, a style called "Constitution mirror," and sold extensively throughout the country because it had an eagle surrmounting it. Otherwise the style followed accepted English designs. This one had on the back, "Made by Bartholomew Plain, Chatham Street, New York," a worthy who flourished around 1810. The frame was of mahogany, with a straight, cornice top, surmounted by two upward arching, wing-like ornaments, between which perched the eagle, made of plaster and gilded. Down each side of the glass fell a delicate garland of gilded leaves, and the

fluted bottom rested upon two large glass rosettes on the end of wooden pegs driven into the wall. This rest allowed the mirror to pitch forward slightly. At about the time of the making of this mirror there was a fancy for reproducing the style of the Queen Anne ones of 1730, except for the "Constitution" detail. This is rather a curious element in the history of furniture-making, as the Queen Anne styles, after the Revolution, were ignored in other respects.

Cynthia's aunt — I had come to regard everything in the Mendham house merely in their relationships to Cynthia — would, of course, part with only such articles of furniture as she did not have room for,

I regarded it long and meditatively (*Page 121*)

the recent legacy of old pieces somewhat embarrassing her with riches, and it would be an impertinence on my part if I should suggest her selling any which she did not herself offer. Her house was not especially large and she only wanted to sell the pieces which over-filled it. And this mirror and the girandole were the last things she would let go. Hence, if I were to visit the house any more it would not be on the pretext of business. Fortunately, however, I had already reached a stage where it was not necessary to excuse my visits on that plea. My own aunt had become somewhat alarmed at first when I kept buying so many pieces from the place, fearing my enthusiasm for antiques

was rather running away with me, but after she had come to know Cynthia a little she seemed to regard my successive purchases with complete equanimity. In fact she seemed especially pleased for some reason or another over the appearance in my home of one or two things which I had absolutely no use for. During the early spring days my trusty car seemed to turn naturally toward Mendham, and my thoughts were pleasant as one afternoon, having come out early from town, I put on full speed and whizzed into Bernardsville at a startling pace. Three miles away lay Mendham, its white church steeple rising above the green meadows. Soon I was rolling down its shaded street

and drew up before the sweet old stone house with its columned doorway and garden path leading up from the gate.

The maid announced that Miss Greylock senior was ill but that Miss Cynthia was in. I sent up my card to Miss Cynthia forthwith, deposited my furs, goggles, and other disguises upon a massive hall seat, and ensconced myself by the back parlor fireplace. Cynthia appeared presently. I always like girls who don't keep a fellow waiting. While you are waiting ten or fifteen minutes for one to come down, especially if the delay usually occurs, you can't help imagining her unrolling her tresses from curl papers and changing from a wrapper to a dress.

Cynthia never kept people waiting, and her gowns, while charming, had the "homey" and not the "company" atmosphere.

Her aunt, she told me, had not latterly been in good health and she felt rather alarmed about her at times. "The other day," she said, "my aunt sat here before the fire and spoke so sweetly of the old house which had always been her home. She said that to her it was so closely associated with the past that she felt that, although she had spent her lifetime in it, she was but a temporary occupant. 'We come into the world,' she mused, 'and claim a few of its belongings for a time and imagine that we possess them, and

then pass away to give place to others, who, in their turn, imagine the same proprietorship. Outside, in the fields, the crops are sown and reaped and, as the seasons come and go, they rise and fall, and each, perhaps, imagines the fields are theirs for their brief season, and only the Reaper knows how fleeting is their stay. So, here, inside the house, dear old "Greystone," a new portrait appears from time to time, a few books, a kid slipper, a bit of lace, are treasured, a package of old letters is burned and a new generation takes possession. And I am the last in the direct line,' she ended."

"That is a veritable little prose-poem," I said soberly, and we were silent for

awhile. Then, gradually, as the flames leaped up merrily in the fireplace, our talk shifted to less pensive themes. We discussed the merits of old fireplaces and of toasted marshmallows, skating, Bernard Shaw, Alpine travel, garden-making, how to mix a salad dressing, Dutch art, golf, precious stones in finger rings, — illustrated with some she wore, — her hair, my motor, and Bridge. I told her how I had planned to arrange my flower garden and she gave me some excellent hints and promised to send me some hardy roots from her own garden when she returned. She related some of the humorous phases of social life in ancestral Salem and dwelt lovingly on its aristo-

cratic charm and simplicity, and we compared notes as to our respective country clubs.

The shadows lengthened unnoticed. We drew imaginary pictures of some of the scenes which might have been reflected in the glass of the girandole above us — the room when it was new, long before Cynthia's aunt was born, her grandparents furnishing it with those dearly bought pieces brought over from England; the mistress of the house spinning and perhaps, with the hand loom now stored away in the attic, weaving the family linen; the master, a minute-man in the Continental army, faring forth to join the troops of Washington in his "masterly operations

in the Jersies," and perhaps seeing him from time to time when he resided in his beautiful headquarters at Morristown so near by.

Then came the triumphant return after the war — for he did return, this patriotic Greylock ancestor, and the quaint gatherings of young people in the picturesque costumes of the day, the sewing-circles, singing-classes, perhaps a modest dance, and surely many a little flirtation before this very fireplace, for the portraits of the women above us showed them to be beautiful. The world outside changed, woods disappeared, and the farms and gardens sprang up; the great city, once such a journey away, now was linked

closely to the little village; people, costumes, occupations, and ideas altered, but the quiet room remained always the same and the mirror looked reflectively down upon its constancy. Did it look into our souls, Cynthia mused, as we did into its own? Did it register in its mysterious depths the hopes and fears, the loves, passions, and emotions of the people who lived their home lives just below it? And where now were all the pictures caught fleetingly upon its surface? Gone with the faces and scenes of other days, and it seemed to smile down upon us two to-day, giving no hint of its buried mysteries.

We stood in front of the girandole in the gathering twilight, the two cornucopias

pouring out their golden harvest on each side of the great round mirror. Cynthia struck a match and lighted the wax candles held by their graceful spiral brackets. I saw, reflected in the mysterious depth of the ancient glass, the quaint room behind us and, in the center, the face of Cynthia.

"Beautiful," I murmured softly.

"Isn't it?" she replied, referring to the girandole. "Horns of plenty they must have had in the days when those were made. Are you really going to take it?"

Her hand hung close by mine, at her side. Mine seemed to move without conscious effort on my part.

"Look," I said, "do you not see why

it is so beautiful to me?" and I gently drew her face closer to it so that it shone radiantly from the center of the glass. "How empty it would be without that reflection! I should hate it, without your face to be seen in it. May I have it, — just as it is now?

The shadows lengthened unnoticed, and it was quite dark before I took my departure. And as I drove home, over the smiling Jersey hills, I thanked my aunt from the bottom of my heart for interesting me in old furniture. The girandole — and its reflection — were mine.

# X

## THE LEGACY OF PLYMOUTH

IT was just after the winter's last snow-storm that Cynthia and I took a long walk through the woods one afternoon. Sometimes, here in the New Jersey hills, the snow comes down in little round, downy balls which do not, for a time, pack together, and one may thrust his fingers down several inches and find it light and dry like cotton-wool. After it has remained a few days the noonday sunshine and the nightly freezings harden it and transform its surface into great

crystals, all standing on end. It is as if a myriad sparkling white moths had alighted and covered the earth, — moths whose fragile wings had just ceased to flutter but were still poised in the air. In an instant, it seems, they must be folded, unless a breath should startle them away.

To-day, however, it was warmer and the snow clung to every twig, the forests were covered with a heavy rime that transformed the rounded clumps of evergreens into masses of spidery lace. Where, on the steep hillsides, the earth had fallen away from under the roots of the trees, the thick moss peered out beneath them, green and fresh against the black earth and the snow, and over the hollows in the

rocky banks of the stream, that had hushed its brawlings, hung long, slender icicles, strings of the ice-wizard's harp taming the murmur of the winter wind into music which we could not hear. The great branches of the pines and spruces hung low with the heavy snow, graceful as white ostrich plumes.

"Some one has written," said Cynthia, "that if our ears could hear well enough, we should go mad with the music of the sunshine. I am sure a snow-storm is a silent, celestial oratorio."

"If you sprinkle grains of fine sand on a thin metal plate," I replied, "they will form themselves into geometrical patterns to the notes of a violin. For each note there is a different pattern."

"Oh!" she cried, "then the snowflakes, with their many patterns, correspond to musical notes. Some divine Music-Master has created them and they fall in a symphony which we cannot hear!"

"I wonder if the soldiers of Washington thought them fugues when they tramped, cold and tired, through these hills," I mused. "Somehow my new love for old furniture has made me think a good deal of our sturdy ancestors. I believe that is the thing which influenced me to join the Society of Colonial Wars. Unfortunately, most of our family heirlooms, furniture especially, was destroyed in the great Portland fire years ago. My grandfather was a supreme court judge and was giving

a dinner the night it occurred. He and his wife and their guests stepped to the door to see what the noise was about and never returned to the house. They were forced to run to safety at once, leaving everything behind them."

"What a tragedy!" gasped Cynthia.

"I like to think of our sturdy New England ancestors," I continued. "When I was living in England one winter, I used to wonder why I could not take sport as seriously as did some of my English friends. Sport to them was something almost sacred in its dignity, — a serious occupation. With me it was only to be regarded as a relaxation. It is because their inheritances are different from ours. They are descen-

dents of generations of gentlemen of leisure, — knights at arms, feudal barons, and roving soldiers of fortune, we from Puritans and devout Huguenots. While their ancestors hunted the wild boar, ours were hewing the forests and planting their simple homes and meeting-houses in a new and hard-won world. I do not think that this great wealth which has so suddenly come to some Americans rests gracefully with all of them because of this very legacy of Plymouth to which they are heir."

"After all," said Cynthia, "what life could be sweeter than my aunt's, who has lived serenely there, all her years, in dear old Greystone."

A little later, a merry little group of four gathered about the mahogany table in the Mendham home. My aunt had come up by train to Bernardsville and had driven over in a cab, and I was to take her home in my motor. I raised my glass to Miss Greylock senior.

"To the house of inherited old furniture," I toasted, "and good wishes from one who, in collecting it, has found a prize dearer than his hopes!" And Cynthia smiled at me across the cut-glass.

"You should toast me too," said my aunt, "since it was I who started you on your quest. You have made a fine success of your collecting, and your Prize makes up for the fact that, after all, your furni-

ture once belonged to other people's ancestors. You and I haven't the satisfaction of feeling that ours are family pieces, a satisfaction which Miss Greylock must have." And she glanced admiringly about her.

"Some people," said Miss Greylock, "say that if they haven't old furniture of their own they would rather have new than old, that they prefer clean and modern pieces, but I think old furniture is old furniture and that your way is far better. Each to his taste, however, but I believe that if you did not have an appreciation of it inborn, you would not care for it so much."

Cynthia and I looked at each other suddenly.

"Furniturosophy!" we exclaimed, simultaneously and laughed.

Then we had to explain to the others our whimsical theory of character-reading, and all too soon it was time for my aunt and me to take our departure.

# XI

## THE HOUSE THAT CHANGED ITS GENDER

I STOOD under the oak-pinned, thatch-roof litch gate in front of my house and regarded it long and meditatively. I had a problem to solve. Slowly and painstakingly I had perfected a thorough bachelor's establishment. It was, I prided myself, artistic but essentially masculine in character, especially inside, in its scheme of decoration. The flower garden in front was possibly suggestive of woman's tastes, but why should not a man love flowers?

And if he loved flowers, why should he not have a flower garden? Otherwise, however, the place was essentially masculine, and now, wonder of wonders! the face of the world had so changed its aspect that it was necessary to revolutionize matters after the master bargain of the girandole had been made — the greatest bargain in the world. "Heart's Ease," the name I had chosen, in my bachelor self-sufficiency, was to become "Heart's Desire," and when Cynthia should come to it as its charming mistress it must be in fitting guise.

It was early spring and the rose trees in the tiny formal garden in front of me had emerged from their straw wrappings

and were unfurling delicate green leaves. From the litch gate which stood at the foot of the terrace, half-way up the drive-way which led from the street to the side entrance of the house, extended a gravel path along the foot of the grass terrace to a point in front of the front door. Thence, at right angles to it, rose three stone steps to the top of the terrace, on which spread out in conventional beds, marked off by narrow gravel paths, the flower garden, bounded on one side by the heavy wooden balustrade, running along the top of the terrace, on the other by the porch, and on each end by low barberry hedges. In the center was the sun-dial.

In front of the porch, which extended

across the entire front of the house, was a flower bed, in which, during the summer weeks, bloomed tall Hollyhocks and Phlox, which rose close to the porch. In front of them, a little lower in stature, were Sweet Williams, Foxglove, Coryopsis, and Peonies. In the foremost rank were the low-growing Sweet Violets, Jonquils, Hardy Pinks, and Colombine — a veritable grand stand, with tier upon tier of rosy flower faces nodding together and watching the games going on between bees, butterflies, and blossoms in the garden in front of them during the long summer days. In the prim little box-bordered beds before them were such bright annuals and perennials as Petunias,

Canterbury-bells, Veronica, Lychnis, Yellow Alyssum, and Ageratum. Through the center of the garden, bordering the path leading from the porch steps to the terrace, were stately rose trees with a border of Iris and Lilies in front of them.

The gray cement walls of the house rose to a terra-cotta roof and the porch floor was of large, square tiles also of terra-cotta. The smaller windows on the second story were casement and of small, diamond-shaped panes of irregular shape, so that the leaded sash did not run slantwise up and down in stiff, unbroken lines.

Outwardly the place was well enough as it was, but how should the interior of the house be made harmonious to the new

order of things? The femininizing of a bachelor establishment was the problem which confronted me as I stood there under the litch gate that gentle April morning.

The entrance hall was wainscoted in oak, and above the wainscot was a great moose head and several of deer with wide-spread antlers. These could undoubtedly remain after they had been bereft of a motley collection of riding crops, cartridge belts and spurs. So, too, could the straight-back, heavily carved Jacobean chairs. The dining-room had a high cherry wainscot, stained mahogany, and on the shelf at its top were steins, golf and tennis cups, and college trophies. These latter could easily

be relegated to a den which I should have somewhere up-stairs. Ah! An idea! Remove the billiard-table from the south front room on the second floor to one of the unused rooms on the third story, convert the present billiard-room, with its alcove overlooking the rose garden, into Cynthia's bedroom, and put my trophies, steins, and riding crops into the new one! Finish the billiard-room in soft, gray fumed oak, and have fumed oak furniture! On the main floor, at the right of the hall, was my lounge or living room, on the left the library. The former must, of course, be converted into a drawing-room. The latter could remain somewhat as it was.

So, after this admirable plan of cam-

paign was arranged in my mind, I betook myself to the local decorator's shop and, during the spring days, as the flowers came forth in my garden, an equally successful unfolding of grace took place inside the house. I had purposely refrained from telling Cynthia the details as I wanted to surprise her when she first saw the place, but my aunt was a tower of strength and came up daily to advise and superintend. My living-room with its lounging chairs, pipe-racks, and burlap-covered walls became a dainty salon with white enamel woodwork and light paneled walls. The library remained, in the main, as it was, and it was surprising how a few touches changed the gender of the bachelor's home

into one suitable for the reception of a bride.

During those spring days, too, great changes occurred in Mendham. Cynthia's aunt died and, as the old lady had no immediate family, the house was closed, the valuables stored, the furniture carefully covered, and Cynthia returned to her home in Salem. Curiously enough, no will was found and all arrangements as to the disposal of Miss Greylock's small estate were postponed, as she had a ne'er-do-well brother, possibly still alive, somewhere in the West.

April showers brought May flowers, and, as the first days of June were born, the finishing touches were put on all my

preparations. The last touch to my rearranged house I did myself. That was to hang over the fireplace in the dining-room the girandole, which, after perhaps a century of familiar scenes, now looked down for the first time upon new surroundings. It had been freshly gilded, and as I stood before it, peering into its mysterious depths, with all their buried memories, I said to it softly and affectionately:

"You are beautiful, dear old glass, but your heart is empty for the old loves. Never mind, soon the new Love will be here and her face will shine once more, in reflection, from your depths."

## XII

### WEDDING BELLS IN SALEM TOWN

IN June, the month of roses and weddings, I made the second happiest motor trip of my life. The happiest occurred a fortnight later. I went to Salem to marry Cynthia and bring her back to "the house that changed its gender." When I had told her my vainglorious bachelor name for it, "Heart's Desire," she said:

"Why don't you give it some old furniture name? Combine Hepplewhite and Chippendale and call it 'Heppeldale,'

which really wouldn't have been a bad name.

The trip was a happy one because so full of anticipations. As I sped eastward, I went back, in reverie, over the various episodes in my old furniture collecting, — the eager-faced little man in the Old Curiosity Shop, the emporium of Old Pierre and Young Pierre, the discovery of "Greystone" and the fateful events which followed, and lastly, I summarized in my mind the anatomy of old furniture history. This is the way it took concrete form.

With memories of the Field of the Cloth of Gold fresh in his impressionable mind, Henry VIII, on his return to England, was inspired to introduce some of the

magnificence of the French Court. Architecture wakened to new life and the ensuing "Tudor," or "English Rennaissance" period of furniture-making was merely a commingling of French, Italian, and Flemish styles. The "linen fold" motive in wood paneling was a detail. Following this came the "Elizabethan" styles, showing more unity in design, and the "Jacobean," with carved walnut furniture, veneer, marquetry, spiral-leg tables, dog-tooth borders, and spindle ornaments. With William of Orange, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, came the turning-point in English furniture-making and the Dutch simplicity came in. The cabriole leg was the notable feature of it.

The earlier Italian, Dutch, and English furniture was, for the most part, massive and heavily carved, this style culminating in the "golden age" of furniture in England in the seventeenth century. With the opening of the eighteenth, this fashion began to decline and the more graceful, delicate, cabriole or bandy-leg furniture began to be developed. Chests of drawers took the place of cupboards, and tables and chairs were lighter in build. Early in Queen Anne's reign, the straight cornice gave way to the swan-neck or broken arch, and cherry and mahogany, delicately carved, were for the first time used. Then came the master furniture artist, Chippendale, who wrested the honor

of the names of styles from monarchs and placed it where it belonged, upon the craftsmen. After his time, styles were named after the men who designed them, and not after the king who patronized the designers.

Henceforth, furniture would not be classed as "Stuart," or "Elizabethan," but as "Chippendale," "Hepplewhite," or "Sheraton." What, then, are the mysterious differences between the styles of these greatest of craftsmen? I had searched through many books to learn, no one writer had told me succinctly and definitely. And of my own experience I had arranged their characteristics thus in my mind.

Chippendale was, preeminently, a chair-maker, and the ribbon-back chair was his specialty, beautiful in line and carving. Chairs with carved legs and open-work backs, henceforth to be made, showed his influence. As Chippendale held sway during the reign of George III, Hepplewhite, the second great master, influenced England about 1780. His styles were more graceful and delicate than Chippendale's, but his construction was often faulty. He was a better artist than a mechanic. His chairs always had oval, shield, or heart-shaped backs, and the swell or serpentine front bureaus and sideboards were his, most delicate of line and inlay.

Sheraton, the last of the famous furni-

ture-makers, flourished in the last decade of the eighteenth century. He eschewed the cabriole or curved leg entirely and used straight, tapering lines, similar to those of Hepplewhite. He did little carving, relying for the most part on inlay, painting, and brass trimmings, and he certainly achieved brilliant effects. His sideboards closely resembled Hepplewhite's, surpassing them mechanically. The slender, fluted leg, set in a rosette, was his.

The chief French styles were the three Louis' and the Empire. Louis XIV means formal rococo work, boldness, lavishness, and exquisite execution. The best "Quatorze" pieces were dignified and well

proportioned. Shell work, the acanthus leaf, the ram's head, the mask and the satyr were its features. The rococo work went to extremes with Louis XV. Everything was over-ornamented. The "broken shell," the "curled endive," and the "spiral scroll" painting and goldsmithery were prominent. There were no plain surfaces and the fantastic and the extravagant were the order of the day. With Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette came a return to more classic simplicity because of the interest in the discoveries at Pompeii. The fluted column, the bay leaf, the acorn, the acanthus, and the Greek band were introduced and straight lines superseded curves. Marie Antoinette, in furnishing

the Petit Trianon, introduced cane seats and backs, often gilded, in the chairs and sofas.

The only other preeminent modern French style was the Empire, born of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. Its key-notes were carved heads and feet of griffins, sphinxes, lions, and mummies, a profuse amount of wood, brass, and ormulu (tortoise-shell) inlay.

From the first modern school of furniture-making several others sprang up and, as these various styles were disseminated, copied, adapted, and intermixed, the patterns multiplied and became so mixed that the chaos of a generation or two ago followed and spread its blight till the

Goddess of Good Taste came to the rescue of our homes, and we moderns are only just now learning to repudiate the meretricious stuff of our fathers and to go back, with a new appreciation of their beauties, to the simpler and more classic styles of earlier years.

Here, then, was the history of the more modern furniture-making in a nutshell. Having thus constructed the royal short-cut to knowledge on the subject, a veritable Duffer's Guide, — I pursued my royal road toward the goal of my heart and, after a successful run, my trusty motor car whirled me out of Connecticut into Massachusetts, through Boston and into Salem town.

I reached there a day or two before my

wedding-day, because I had one or two novel preparations to make, and became the guest of Cynthia's married brother, who lived in one of the newer residence streets. She herself lived in the family home, a substantial square brick mansion on historic Chestnut Street. Partly by good luck and partly by the aid of Cynthia's brother, I had found that one of the famous old clipper ships, one of the smallest of them all, was still in commission, plying from Boston to neighboring ports. It was clean and delightfully picturesque and I had chartered it and its small crew for a fortnight's cruise to Nova Scotia, so that I might imagine myself for the time being a Salem merchant-captain,

taking my bride in my own craft out into the high seas. On our return to Salem we were to continue to my home in my motor-car.

It was a novel event in Salem, — the entrance of this ancient craft into the harbor it had once known so well, and all Salem seemed to gather at the silent and deserted harbor as her creamy sails hove into sight from out the blue sea the day before the wedding and dropped anchor near the shore. Cynthia and I, with a group of her friends, watched it with some little emotion, but what we two said was not overheard.

Then the giant elms of Chestnut Street took on a new grace, the birds in Salem's

The wedding bells rang joyously in Salem town
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old-fashioned gardens sang a more joyous music, the salt-touched New England air seemed to grow aromatic with the spices of the East Indies, and the wedding bells rang joyously in Salem town.

Cynthia's home was in a gala dress of flowers and she herself carried a nosegay from my own garden in New Jersey, and among the tokens of affection from Cynthia's home friends were some pieces of old furniture that shamed the best ones I had at home. But we thought little of furniture, old or new, that day, and in the early afternoon we stood together on the after-deck of our little clipper ship and watched the rowboat loads of people gliding back to the shore. The clank of

the capstan, as the anchor came up dripping from the water, the creaking of the pulleys as the sheets grew taut, and the whistle of the boatswain, were music to our ears as the sails swelled gently and the shores of Salem harbor grew indistinct behind us.

# XIII

## IN WHICH CYNTHIA AND I ACHIEVE OUR HEARTS' DESIRE

ON the last days of our wedding tour we passed through Mendham, having left the clipper in Salem harbor, and continued, by the motor-car, on the road home. The June sunshine sparkled against the windows of the pretty homes and glowed warm and bright on the well-kept lawns and bright flower gardens. Cynthia's hand crept gently to my knee and rested there flutteringly as we passed "Greystone." Weeds were growing in

the brick path leading up from the gate and the house looked dark and bare.

I put on speed and swept out of the village.

"Home!" I cried, and Cynthia smiled again.

Down Morristown's superb Madison Avenue we sped, past its great pillared mansions with their marble terraces, formal gardens, great stables, and noble lawns, past bits of woods and smiling fields, over the crest of the Orange mountains and down to the nest I had been for so long unconsciously feathering for this fair new occupant. Cynthia gave a little cry of wonder and pleasure as we turned into the gravel driveway and halted at

the foot of the rose garden. Together we alighted and walked up the narrow walk with rose trees on each side. She paused a moment at the sun-dial and read the inscription carved on the side.

"Sunshine and shadow, — so too our lives are made,
But ah! how great the sun, how small the shade!"

Oto, my Japanese boy, met us, beaming, at the door, but retired shortly as I wished to be alone with my sweet little wife as she saw her new home for the first time. With constantly varying tokens of delight she explored the oak wainscoted hall with its carved Jacobean chairs, the library, where she greeted, like an old friend, the Scrutoir, in the purchase of which my aunt had outwitted me and then presented

to me,— an incident I had related to Cynthia more than once, — and on the landing on the stairway, the tall clock which was my first old-furniture purchase and which led to such far-reaching results.

Her trunks had arrived shortly after the wedding and my aunt had added a few feminine touches to Cynthia's dainty bedroom, where some of the furniture she had used at Mendham and which I had ruthlessly carried off, now newly done over, was waiting to greet her. The walls were papered one third of the way down with a French wall-paper of pale pink flowers on a white ground. Below the white picture molding was a pink and white stripe paper. The woodwork was white enamel.

By the white-draperied casement window, looking out over the rose garden, was a great, square wing-chair with carved legs, upholstered in linen taffeta, figured with green leaves and red roses on a cream background. Near it stood a small mahogany sewing-table with four square drawers, with glass handles supported by a polished column. The four-post bed was very lightly curtained and the highboy in the corner was the one I had borne away on the occasion of my first visit to Mendham. The dressing-table, too, was once used there by Cynthia.

A little later we dined, vis-a-vis, in the colonial dining-room, its walls wainscoted in cherry, stained mahogany, and

with a dark tapestry above. The polished mahogany table with its heavy columned base was partly concealed beneath the damask and the flowers, the Sheffield plate, and the old cut-glass. We talked, however, not of the old, but of the new. Cynthia presided with charming grace as hostess at her own table for the first time in her life, and my cup of happiness was full. Early in the evening the car was brought around and we drove down to my aunt's, where she had been an occasional visitor.

"And now," said my aunt, after we had described our trip and the home-coming, "upon this historic occasion let us explore the secret compartment in the clock."

Cynthia glanced at it observingly for the first time and uttered a slight ejaculation.

To say was to do. I took off my coat and removed the glass-faced top, lifted out the long pendulum, took the weights from the chains, lifted out the works, and with great care put the long empty case over on the floor. The ladies bent eagerly over me as I unscrewed the false bottom, and gasped aloud as I drew forth a packet of papers and a small parcel wrapped in cotton cloth. In an instant I had a dear little miniature of Cynthia, as a child, and a long, sealed envelope in my hands, and in the latter was the missing will of my wife's aunt!

When I announced this portentous news

the two ladies dropped, speechless, into convenient chairs and I revealed its import. In it the old lady had bequeathed what little fortune she had to her errant brother, — the sisterly heart remaining true to him after all, — except the Mendham home, "and all that should be contained therein at the time of her death," to her beloved niece Cynthia, who had shown a true affection for it and who had brightened its rooms so often by her visits.

Cynthia, a trifle dewy as to her blue eyes, exclaimed, "Mine! ours! the dear old Mendham house! We will make it our country home and spend part of each summer there and run up once in awhile in winter, and give jolly little house par-

ties! We can put back the wood paneling in the dining-room which Aunt Cynthia tore out and stored away down cellar, and restore the dear old-fashioned garden to its glory!"

"Does this mean," I asked solemnly, "that I must take back all the furniture I have been so industriously collecting from it all these months?"

"No, indeed," she replied, "I love them better than ever where they are."

"But — but —" interrupted my aunt, still bewildered, "how did the will come in that clock?"

Cynthia turned to her explanatorily.

"She sold the clock," she said, "to Old Pierre some time ago. It was the first

piece of her old furniture she disposed of. She was very absent-minded at times and evidently had entirely forgotten about the will and the secret drawer, and Old Pierre never discovered it."

"And it was Old Pierre who let slip that the highboy was for sale there! That is how I came to discover the house."

"And how I came to discover you," I added, sitting down beside Cynthia.

"Well, you've got me to thank for it all," said my aunt, triumphantly. "Aren't you glad I got interested in old furniture?"

Cynthia and I ran over to her and kissed her.